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ABSTRACT

This study, conducted in Knox County, Tennessee, compared retention scores of students using traditional learning methodologies to retention scores of students taught using cooperative learning strategies. Participants (n=23) remained the same during both phases of instruction. A comparison of posttest scores of a fifth grade social studies unit taught using traditional instruction to that of a social studies unit taught using cooperative learning strategies showed no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the students' performance after cooperative learning instruction. The hypothesis was retained: there is no significant difference between retention scores of students who are taught social studies with cooperative learning strategies and retention scores of students who are taught social studies through traditional methods. Nine of the twenty-three students who participated in this study increased their test average by nine percent or better under cooperative learning strategies. However, as a class the test average decreased by two percent on average during cooperative learning instruction. More research is needed in this area. (Contains 2 figures, 1 table, and a 45-item bibliography. Approval forms are appended.) (Author/BT)

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ED 451 102

THE EFFECTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ON THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

An Action Research Project

Presented to the

Department of Teacher Education

Johnson Bible College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts in Holistic Education

SO 032 617

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by

Stacey Lee Hoxworth

September 1999

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APPROVAL PAGE

This Action Research Project by Stacey Lee Hoxworth is accepted in it present form by the Department of Teacher Education at Johnson Bible College as satisfying the research paper requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Holistic Education.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The researcher in this proposed research project will examine the effects of Cooperative Learning on the Social Studies curriculum currently used by Knox County, Tennessee Schools. Cooperative Learning strategies will be introduced to see if they aid in the retention of social studies facts by the students.

Significance of the problem

Currently, many students have difficulty understanding the importance for learning social studies. Most students merely memorize the basic textual facts strictly for regurgitation on test days. This in part could be due to the lack of emphasis that teachers in general place upon the Social Studies curriculum. The National Council for the Social Studies Task Force on Early Childhood/Elementary School Social Studies (NCSS) found that elementary Social Studies too often is taught seldom and poorly (NCSS, 1989). Many schools tend to emphasize Reading and Mathematics thereby leaving the other disciplines to suffer unnecessarily.

Statement of the problem

Generally, after a Social Studies unit is taught the students test over the material. Most of the students who studied do well. However, a veteran teacher of over twenty

years related that in her observations, if these students were given the same test several weeks later, the majority of students would score poorly due to lack of retention. Or, perhaps the material was not learned, placed in long-term memory, in the first place. The process of short-term memorization predominantly uses lower-level thinking skills, which causes the learner to forget what was previously taught to them because it was not truly learned in the first place. However, Cooperative Learning focuses on higher order thinking skills including critical thinking, long-term retention, and increased achievement. Essentially, Cooperative Learning should allow the student to move beyond the textbook to become self-confident, life-long learners.

Definition of Terms

Cooperative Learning is defined as students working together in structured groups, helping each other learn, and earning rewards for their efforts. (Breeden and Mosley, 1992) For the purpose of this study, the researcher will adopt the same definition.

Traditional instruction involves an individualistic mentality. It is predominately teacher-directed and the students work alone on the assigned tasks.

Positive Interdependence is a term that describes the relationships among the members of a cooperative group. The students who have good positive interdependence skills believe that the only way the group can succeed is if they themselves succeed.

Face-to-Face Interaction (Promotive Interaction) is a term that describes interaction among the members of a cooperative learning group. Promotive interaction

exists when the members of the group encourage and facilitate the efforts of each other in order to achieve the group's goals.

Group Processing is when the group is able to evaluate how well they are working together.

Limitations of the study

In the past decade there has been one prominent limitation to Cooperative Learning research, the process of selecting the groups. Cooperative Learning involves grouping students heterogeneously or homogeneously for learning information, problem solving, and social interaction skills. Some researchers prefer teacher-selected heterogeneous groups, while others prefer randomly selected homogeneous groupings. The researcher for this project adopted the teacher-selected heterogeneous grouping method.

Another limitation to this study is the fact that the researcher was also the teacher. The researcher assigned the students to the groups on the pretext that the students would be able to get along with each other within the group.

Assumptions

Since this study will incorporate all of the students (one classroom) into both the treatment and control groups, the assumption is made that both groups will work the same under traditional instruction and cooperative learning instruction. Therefore, the ability level of the students will be the same.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between retention scores of students who experience Social Studies instruction taught with Cooperative Learning strategies and retention scores of students who experience Social Studies instruction taught through traditional learning methods at the .05 level of significance.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As we come upon the verge of the twenty-first century, one thing is evident; teaching methodologies must change in order to keep up with the new innovations that are at hand. As societal values decline there is a need for more interaction among the future leaders of society. The following vignette demonstrates the need for change in how youngsters are taught.

> I was recently visiting writing classes in elementary schools. One fifth–grade class had written compositions on "My Moment of Glory." As the students read their compositions aloud, I was struck by a common theme: Each described a "moment of glory" as the experience of coming through for a team, or of success of a group. One girl described her "moment of glory" as the time her float won a prize in the Thanksgiving parade. A boy described shooting a basket at the last minute that won the basketball game. None of the students mentioned their individual successes outside of a group as a "moment of glory;" certainly, no one mentioned getting an "A" or "completing a difficult assignment in class."
>
> Succeeding in a group activity is one of the most exhilarating experiences in life. Working with others to attain an important goal is so rewarding because not only do we experience success ourselves, but also we help others to do so. As a result, groupmates respect and value one another.
>
> The power of groups working cooperatively to achieve a common goal is apparent in all realms of human activity. Yet in schools, cooperative activities are mostly restricted to the playing field, and are rarely seen in the academic classroom. We notice that students who seem completely unmotivated in class will exert heroic efforts on the softball field or debate team. Consider the differences between the team setting and the traditional classroom setting. In the team, one student's success helps others to achieve their goals. As a result, team members encourage and help one another.
>
> In contrast, in the classroom, one student's success may make it more difficult for others to succeed, by "raising the curve" or "raising teachers' expectations of students. As a result, classmates may discourage each other's academic efforts, communicating a norm that those who strive to succeed in academics are "teacher's pets" or "nerds." Teamwork is fun, but that is not why

> teamwork works. Teamwork works because it creates a social and motivational environment that expects and assists maximum effort.
>
> How can the powerful dynamics of team organization be harnessed for use in the classroom? The activity and noise of the playing field are inappropriate in the classroom, and the goals of the academic classroom are quite different from those of the sports team. Yet the essential dynamics of team organization can be successfully transplanted to the classroom setting, and when they are, students will put the kind of effort and commitment into learning and helping each other learn that they put into team sports (Slavin, 1986).

Based on the preceding vignette it is quite evident that teamwork permeates all aspects of our society and can be introduced into the classroom setting.

Evidence of the Need for Cooperative Learning Instruction

During the past 20 years numerous studies have been done in various grades and academic disciplines documenting the effectiveness of Cooperative Learning. Surprisingly, it is the least used of the three primary methods of teaching and learning: individualistic, competitive, and cooperative (Johnson and Johnson, 1984).

There are four factors that stress the need for cooperative learning in the current educational system: the student achievement crisis, requirements for new workers in business and industry, the decline in student's social skills and current educational research. (Roy, 1990)

Student Achievement Crisis

In a 1983 report, A Nation at Risk published by The National Committee on Excellence in Education stated that our school systems were precariously perched on the brink of disaster. Not only was it possible to graduate from high school without being

able to read, write, or do simple arithmetic, it was the norm. The media was instrumental in bringing this crisis to the public at large. Television, newspapers, and even political debates focused on the decline in achievement scores among the nation's students. Many national councils and special advisory groups were formed, such as the National council for the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTM), to design curriculum standards to combat this decline. The advisory groups focused mainly on curriculum by setting evaluation and assessment standards, which were deemed beneficial by the facility and staff of many school systems. All areas of the curriculum were affected in the end. However, studies have shown that the method in which the curriculum is taught has greater effect on student's achievement than does the curriculum by itself. Cooperative Learning, when compared with competitive and individualistic learning, results in higher achievement, greater achievement motivation, more positive attitudes towards learning, more constructive relationships among students, higher level reasoning processes, and higher self-esteem to name a few. (Dishon and O'Leary 1984)

Business and Industry Needs

In a study of people who had been fired from their jobs, researchers found that 90% of the respondents were not fired as a result of poor job performance. The firings were due to poor job attitudes, poor interpersonal relationships, and inappropriate behavior (Breeden and Mosley, 1992). Essentially, the workers could not work cooperatively with their peers.

W. Edwards Deming, a leader in the Total Quality Management principles

adopted by many leading industries in the 1980's, has stated that more that 85 percent of the behavior of members of an organization is directly attributable to the organization's structure, not to the nature of the individuals involved (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1994).

Both of these examples can be directly related to the education that the workers received in school. Most students are unskilled in collaborating and need specific training in how to work effectively with other students. If competitive or individualistic learning dominates the school system, then the future workforce will react similarly. It is apparent that for those who want to achieve success in life a foundation of social and cooperative skills is required.

This concept has come to be the focus of the airline industry. It seems that a lack of cooperation among the cockpit crews during flights has resulted in many airline tragedies (Roy, 1990). As a result, airlines are spending millions of dollars to teach their employees how to cooperate effectively on the job.

In the end, the school should be as concerned with teaching students cooperation skills as they are with teaching them academic skills such as reading and writing.

Decline of Student Social Skills

Peer interaction is a key to the success of the Cooperative Learning program. Since the students are required to work with each other in groups, social skills are imperative. Vygotsky (1978) stated that intellectual growth is a dynamic social–interactive process. Often, in a competitive classroom, social skills tend to suffer. When

competition is the central tendency of a classroom, students may learn to value winning at all costs, and cooperation may be discouraged (Conrad, 1988). To be effective, students working in a Cooperative Learning group must know how to provide effective leadership, decision making, trust–build, communication, and conflict–management skills (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1994). With these skills students will be able to relate appropriately to others who are different from them in terms of social background, physical condition, intellectual skill, or social proficiency (Dishon and O'Leary, 1984)

Educational Research

Cooperative Learning has been used for many years. John Dewey, one of the best known educational theorists of the modern era, incorporated Cooperative Learning into his school design. In the past 90 years, over 500 studies have been conducted by a wide variety of researchers. Studies looked at different aged subjects, different curriculum areas, and different settings. In 1981 researchers conducted a meta-analysis of 122 different Cooperative Learning studies (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, and Skon, 1981). Results indicated that Cooperative Learning experiences tend to promote higher achievement than do competitive and individualistic learning experiences (Roy, 1990). Nath also found that Cooperative Learning promotes student achievements by coupling individual accountability with group incentives and recognition (Nath, Ross, and Smith 1996).

In a study of the effects of cooperative learning among Hispanic students in Elementary social studies researchers sought to determine if cooperative learning effected

the achievement and self-esteem of the participants as opposed to traditional instruction. The researchers found a significant difference in achievement among the cooperative learning treatment group. However, no significant difference was found in the area of self-esteem. The researchers determined that cooperative learning provides a valuable instructional approach for social studies education (Lampe, Rooze, and Tallent-Runnels,1996).

All four of these factors point to the need for more Cooperative Learning instruction in the current educational system. An effective Cooperative Learning program combined with a good curriculum and a supportive staff will surely increase the learning for all students involved.

Elements of Cooperative Learning

"Together we stand, divided we fall." Watchword of the American Revolution

In 1991 researchers identified five basic elements that are imperative to creating a cooperative community. These five elements are positive interdependence, face–to–face interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal and small group skills (social skills), and group processing (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1991). In the following section a closer look will be taken at each element.

Positive Interdependence- For many years schools, teachers, and parents have promoted an I, me, my, mentality in the students. Students have always been told in school to, "do your own work," "keep your eyes on your own paper," "sharing answers is considered cheating," and the list can go on and on. Cooperative Learning, however,

seeks to change that by restructuring the reasons for students to work together. The first element, positive interdependence, seeks to do just that.

Positive interdependence is a term that describes the relationship between members of a cooperative group (Dishon and O'Leary, 1984). According to Johnson and Johnson (1989), positive interdependence exists when one perceives that one is linked with others in a way so that one cannot succeed unless they do (and vice versa) and/or that one must coordinate one's efforts with the efforts of others to complete a task. Students with good positive interdependence skills work well within the confines of cooperative group instruction. They are mutually responsible for each other's learning and success as well as for their own learning and success.

Positive interdependence is also the perception that one cannot succeed unless all the other group members do and vice versa (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1991). In small groups, learning is maximized through positive interdependence. It is the "all for one and one for all" attitude.

There are two major categories of positive interdependence as defined by Johnson and Johnson (1989). First, there is outcome interdependence or the desired outcome, goal, or reward. Second, mean interdependence; or the way in which the outcome is achieved (Deutsch, 1949; Thomas, 1957; Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Positive interdependence can be strengthened in at least three ways. These three ways can be called the three "R's" of positive interdependence: Reward interdependence, Resource interdependence, and Role interdependence. First, there is reward interdependence. Reward Interdependence prevails when each member of a

group receives the same reward for successfully completing the task (Roy, 1984; Molyneux, 1994). Reward Interdependence is the easiest to implement into a Cooperative Learning program because it is tangible and observable. A second method to strengthen positive interdependence is through Resource Interdependence. This is simply dividing the labor within the group. Each member of the group is assigned a role and given the appropriate materials to fulfill that role. In other words, one member does not possess all of the materials to complete the task and must therefor rely on the other members of the group to complete the task. The final way for strengthening positive interdependence is through Role Interdependence. Role Interdependence exists when there is a shared goal that the group must attain. The group members work within their respective role to reach that goal. Role interdependence seeks to highlight a student's strength rather than his/her weakness.

The following table shows the typical behaviors of students when positive interdependence is and is not in place. This information has been adapted from lists contained in, A Guidebook for Cooperative Learning by Dishon and O'Leary (1984).

Figure 1

Typical Student Behaviors When
Positive Interdependence
Is and Is Not In Place

Positive Interdependence Within the Group	Lack of Positive Interdependence Within the Group
➢ Students stay with the group	➢ Students leave their group without their group's permission
➢ Students talk about the task	➢ Students talk, but not about the task
➢ Materials are shared	➢ Students protect their answers and do not share
➢ Answers are shared	➢ No one checks to see if the others have learned the material
➢ Students drill each other on the material	➢ Each person is writing
➢ Heads are close together over the group's paper	➢ People work independently, not involved in the group effort
➢ Others watch as one person writes	

Positive interdependence has numerous effects on individuals' motivation and productivity, not the least of which is that it highlights the fact that the efforts of all group members are needed for group success (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Face–to–Face Interaction- The second of the five basic elements of Cooperative Learning is called Face-to-Face Interaction. Face-to-Face, also known as Promotive interaction, has been defined as individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to complete tasks and achieve in order to reach the group's goals (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). There are several actions that occur during promotive interaction. There are students encouraging, supporting, praising, and helping each other's efforts to learn. A classroom rich in promotive interaction clearly enhances student relationships, and allows the students to know one another, accept and respect each other, and value each

other's differences as resources (Molyneux, 1994). Promotive interaction plays a central part in the success of a cooperative classroom environment.

Individual Accountability- Along with positive interdependence and promotive interaction, a key factor to the success of Cooperative Learning is individual accountability. Within the cooperative learning environment, it is important to structure individual accountability, both to insure that individuals contribute to and understand the group's work and to insure that each child can individually apply some procedure or knowledge learned in the group (Boloche and Platt, 1993). This involves being responsible for completing one's share of the work and helping to facilitate the work of the other group members.

The fear of most teachers who plan to incorporate Cooperative Learning into their classroom is that one individual will do all of the work and the others in the group will not participate. This situation has come to be known as the "free rider" effect. According to Slavin (1987), those types of situations would not be defined as Cooperative Learning. He has also pointed out that one necessary condition for increased achievement in cooperative groups is that students recognize that their individual efforts are necessary for the group to be successful (Slavin, 1987). Research has also shown that the smaller the size of the group the greater the individual accountability may be (Thomas, 1957; Johnson and Johnson, 1984). Individual Accountability, a measure of each students' learning, increases the probability that all students will learn and reduces the potential for the "free rider effect" (Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1994; Stevens, 1994; Stevens and Slavin, 1995).

Interpersonal and Small Group Skills (Social Skills)- Placing students into a group

setting and telling them to cooperate to complete a task is often times unsuccessful. The lack of ability to perform this simple task could be due in part to the student's deficiency of social skills. Students must be taught social skills and be allowed to practice them accordingly.

Bandura identified the following set of principles for developing social skills:

1. New behaviors must be labeled and discussed.
2. Students must be able to recognize new behaviors when they occur.
3. Students must be able to label and discuss behaviors in an objective way.
4. Students must have a chance to practice new behaviors.
5. New behaviors should be reinforced when they occur. (Bandura, 1969)

In addition, social skills must be taught as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Therefore, Johnson and Johnson developed a five-step format for teaching social skills. The five-step format goes as follows:

Step One: Name the skill and help the students see the need for the skill.

Step Two: Ensure students understand what the skill is and how to perform the skill.

Step Three: Provide opportunities to practice the skill.

Step Four: Ensure students process their use of the skill.

Step Five: Ensure students persevere in practicing the skill.

(Johnson and Johnson , 1987)

Developing social skills through this process will enhance the students' leadership, decision–making, communication, and conflict–management skills, as well as provide an

effective Cooperative Learning environment.

Group Processing- Group processing is when groups are able to evaluate how well they are working together. Group processing exists when group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec, 1994). Group processing, when encouraged on a consistent basis, increases the use of positive group behaviors and decreases the number of times social skills must be practiced before they become integrated into the students' group behavior patterns (Dishon and O'Leary, 1984). The goals of the group are a two part process. The members of the group must: one, describe which member actions were helpful and unhelpful; and two, make decisions about which actions to continue or change (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

According to Roy (1990), groups will process through stages. The figure below represents the stages that a group goes through. (See Figure 1) It is essential for the teacher to be aware of the stages that a group may go through. By being aware of the stages, the teacher will be able to anticipate student behaviors as they pass through the stages.

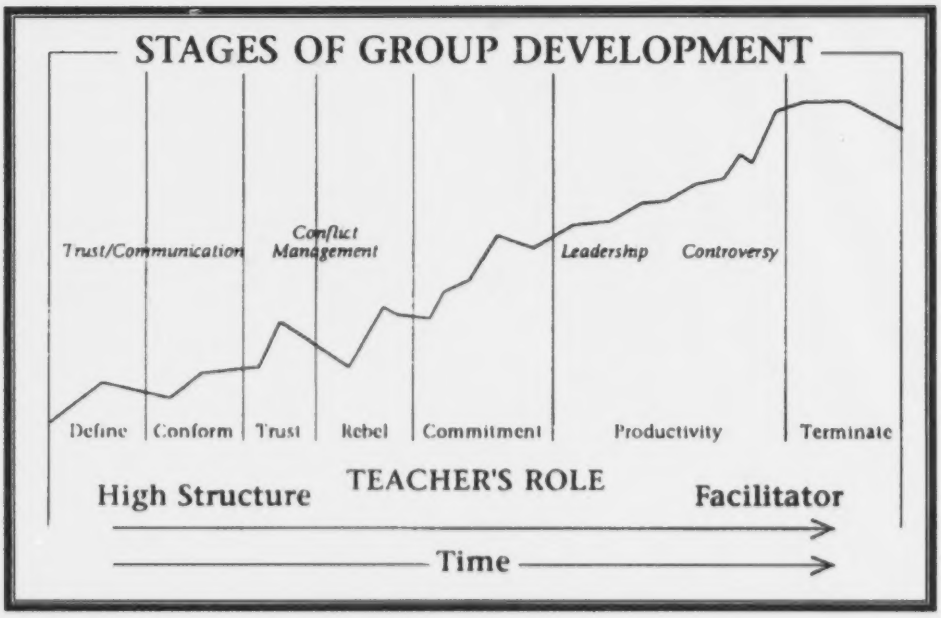

FIGURE 2
Stages of Group Development

In 1985, a study conducted by Stuart Yager (Yager, Johnson, and Johnson, 1985), examined the impact of group processing on achievement. He studied Cooperative Learning groups that used group processing, that did not use group processing, and control group using individualistic teaching methodologies. Of the three groups, only the Cooperative Learning group that implemented group processing strategies was shown to have achieved higher on daily achievement, post–instructional achievement, and retention measures than did the other two conditions (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

> The issue of cooperation among students is part of a larger issue of the organizational structure of schools. For decades schools have functioned as *"mass production"* organizations that divided work into component parts (first grade, second grade; English, social studies, science) to be performed by teachers who are isolated from their colleagues and work alone, in their own room, with their own set of students, and with their own set of curriculum materials. Students

> can be assigned to any teacher because they are considered to be interchangeable parts in the education machine. By using cooperative learning the majority of the time you are changing the basic organizational structure of your classroom to a team-based, high-performance one. In other words, cooperation is more than an instructional procedure. It is a basic shift in organizational structure that will affect all aspects of classroom life (Johnson et.al., 1994).

There is a need for change in current teaching methodologies. A way to start is by incorporating cooperative learning into the daily classroom routine.

Chapter 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Selection of Subjects

This eight-week study was conducted in one fifth-grade regular education classroom (N=23). It will be conducted at an Elementary School, a small suburban school in East Tennessee. The class consists of 23 students, 11 girls and 12 boys, ranging from 10 to 11 years in age. There is a wide representation of intelligence ranging from low achieving, including resource, to talented and gifted. These labels are based according to the students' scores on their annual aptitude test. Likewise, socioeconomic levels have a similar variance.

Timeline of Study

The research project began on January 4, 1999 and concluded eight weeks later on March 4, 1999. The first phase lasted approximately three weeks. During phase one the students were taught a chapter from the social studies curriculum using traditional instruction. The traditional instruction consisted of teacher-directed lecture and textbook-centered reading in a whole-class atmosphere. A posttest was given and the scores recorded for comparison with a social studies chapter taught using cooperative learning strategies.

Phase two of the research began on January 25, 1999 and lasted for five weeks. During this phase students were divided into six small groups, five groups having four students and one group having three students. The groups were then taught a chapter from the social studies curriculum using cooperative learning skills. The teacher incorporated the five basic elements of cooperative learning into the group experience: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal skills, and group processing. In addition, the teacher explained the tasks and objectives of the session, assigned the jobs within the groups, and described the procedures for the learning activity. Examples of group activity included (a) discussing controversial issues, (b) designing and illustrating maps, (c) preparing questions for use in a chapter review game, and (d) writing letters from a historical character's perspective. A posttest was given and the score recorded for comparison with the posttest from phase one.

Test Selection

The posttests that were given came directly from the publisher of the curriculum; Our Country (Silver, Burdett, and Ginn 1995). No pretests were needed due to the fact that all of the students were in both the traditional instruction and the cooperative learning groups.

Statistical Analysis

The posttest mean scores of the traditional instruction unit were compared with the posttest mean scores from the unit taught using cooperative learning strategies using a t-test to determine statistical significance.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Analysis of the Data

A t-test was run to compare the posttest of the unit taught using cooperative learning strategies to that of the unit taught using traditional methods. The results showed that there was no significant difference, at the .05 level of significance, in the students' performance after cooperative learning instruction. These results are represented in Table 2. The researcher retained the hypothesis; there is no significant difference between retention scores of students who experience Social Studies instruction taught with Cooperative Learning strategies and retention scores of students who experience Social Studies instruction taught through traditional learning methods at the .05 level of significance.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Social Studies Posttest Means Between Traditional Learning Instruction and Cooperative Learning Instruction

Groups	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Error of Means	t ratio	Sig. 2 tailed
Traditional	23	85.0435				
			-1.7391	3.1267	-0.556	0.581*
Cooperative	23	86.7826				

*Not Significant

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Cooperative learning as compared with traditional instruction did not make a significant difference in the students' retention, for testing purposes, of the social studies material covered. Although, there was no significant increase among group test scores under cooperative learning, the researcher observed that several students who consistently did poorly on tests in all subjects were actually able to increase their test scores during cooperative learning instruction. To explain this phenomenon would be mere speculation, but the increase in test averages could possibly have resulted from the students' active involvement in the learning process.

The researcher also observed that students who normally remain reserved during whole-class instruction tended to become the leaders within the cooperative learning groups. Perhaps, through the peer interaction during group work the reserved student's self-esteem increased.

Cooperative learning is an alternative to traditional instruction that must be studied further. Although this study failed to prove significantly the benefits of cooperative learning, a larger sample for an extended time period might bring this study in line with what has been found elsewhere.

Conclusions

Nine of the twenty-three students who participated in this study increased their test average by nine percent or better under cooperative learning strategies. On the other

hand, as a class the test average decreased by two percent on average during cooperative learning instruction. While there is no logical explanation for the decrease in test scores averages during cooperative learning instruction, several factors could be considered. For example, the teacher had no formal training in cooperative learning instruction. He was also unfamiliar with the curriculum and had no prior whole-class teaching experience. Also, the time constraints could have lead to the lack of significant results and should not be considered conclusive evidence to the abandonment of cooperative learning as an alternative to traditional instruction.

Recommendations for Implementation

The researcher recommends that teachers continue to experiment with cooperative learning in the classroom. Cooperative learning allows a multitude of viable exchanges to be made between the students (i.e. encouraging one another, summarizing text into understandable vocabulary, probing each other for answers, etc.). Teachers should not fear cooperative learning because of its difficulty to implement. A study by Nath, et. al. (1996) discovered that teachers became increasingly more proficient through the year at using cooperative learning strategies. If a teacher changes her teaching method to better reach one child it was worth the extra effort.

Recommendations for Further Research

Two things would greatly benefit replication of this study. First, a veteran teacher as opposed to a student intern would result in a more accurate study. Secondly, a teacher formally trained in cooperative learning strategies would be a great asset to a study of this nature. Formal training would provide them with the principles and concepts on how to organize cooperative small groups so that all students can benefit from them.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Approval from Knox County Schools

Knox County Schools

Permission to Conduct Research

September 21, 1998

TO: Mr. L. Pat Robinette, Principal, Bonny Kate Elementary School

Subject of Research: Cooperative learning
Name of Researcher: Ms. Stacey L. Hoxworth
Position: Graduate student, JBC
Supervisor/Associate (if applicable): Dr. Chris Templar

Ms. Stacey L. Hoxworth has received permission to contact you concerning her research study entitled, "How Cooperative Learning Affects the Social Studies Curriculum." Although this study has been approved at the central office level, it is our policy to allow the building-level administrator the right to accept or reject a given research project for his/her school or administrative unit. If you have questions or concerns about this project, telephone me at 594-1740. Thank you for your careful consideration of this study.

Samuel E. Bratton, Jr.

Samuel E. Bratton, Jr.
Coordinator of Research and Evaluation

Project No. 906

xc: Ms. LaNoka O. Rhodes, Coordinator of Elementary Schools
Ms. Stacey L. Hoxworth

APPENDIX B

Parental Approval Form

December 7, 1998

Dear Parents,

As you know part of my internship requires me to do some research in the classroom. Therefore, I need your permission for your child to participate in this project.

When we return from Christmas break I will be teaching Chapters 6 & 7 of the Social Studies curriculum in two different ways. First, I will teach Social Studies using a traditional format. This will consist of reading the Chapter as a class, lecture, and discussion. When the Chapter 6 is complete we will test over the information taught. The following Chapter 7 will be taught using Cooperative Learning Groups. The students will be assigned to 3-4 person groups. They will work in these groups to achieve a common goal. They will be rewarded for their overall participation and cooperation. At the end of Chapter 7 we will test over the material. The results of the two tests will then be compared to if Cooperative Learning increased the test scores over traditional instruction.

Please complete the permission blank below and return it with your child no later than Monday, December 14, 1998. If you need to speak with me about this please don't hesitate to call me.

Thanks for your cooperation,

Stacey L. Hoxworth

---Detach and return---

_____ Yes, my child, _____, can participate in this study.
(Student's name)

_____ No, my child, _____, cannot participate in this study.
(Student's name)

PLEASE RETURN BY DECEMBER 14, 1998.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE